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THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Golden Gate Audubon Society Presents 2002/2003 Elsie Roemer Conservation Awards

by Arthur Feinstein

Elsie Roemer was one of our Chapter's most ardent battlers for wildlife conservation, dedicating her life to preserving wetlands in Alameda. In recognition of her efforts (which, in part, resulted in the creation of the Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary located at the south end of Crown Beach in Alameda), GGAS created the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award that is presented to both chapter members and to non-chapter individuals who have demonstrated unusual resolve and activism in the defense of our natural world.

This year we celebrate the efforts of three Golden Gate Audubon members from our East Bay Conservation Committee, Caroline Kim, Carolyn Kolka and Jacqui Smalley.

Caroline Kim and Proposition DD

When Oakland passed Proposition DD last year it included an allocation of \$1 million for wetland restoration in the Lake Merritt Channel. This wonderful inclusion is truly the work of one woman, Caroline Kim.

Caroline has been working on Lake Merritt issues for many years. With previous Conservation Award recipient John Bowers she has worked tirelessly to ensure that wetland restoration was included in the General Plan for the Channel. When Measure DD was being written, Caroline attended meeting after public meeting asking for money for wetland restoration. When the near final draft was released



Caroline Kim.

courtesy Bruce De Benedictis

without such funding, Caroline went one more time, and convinced Council member Danny Wan to include language for wetland restoration in the bond measure. Measure DD passed, and in future years new wetland habitat will be created in the Lake Merritt Channel. Caroline's efforts are a sterling example of how dedicated and persistent efforts can result in great success.

Carolyn Kolka and the Armchair Activists

The success of our Armchair Activist program is due to one woman: Carolyn Kolka. Carolyn recruits new Activists, creates mailings and cajoles our office volunteers into helping her send them to the over 200 Activists now on our list. Armchair Activists are GGAS members who have agreed to write one letter per month on a conservation issue. We don't always have an issue each month, but when we do it is an important one, such as drilling in the Arctic Wilderness, logging old growth forests, or destroying wetlands. When we have a success in an environmental struggle, such as the creation of the East Shore State Park, we know that Carolyn and her Armchair Activists have played a crucial role. Thanks Carolyn—keep up the great work! (If you want to become an Armchair Activist, please call our office at 510.843.2222 or email us at ggas@goldengateaudubon.org).



Carolyn Kolka.

courtesy Carolyn Kolka

continued on back page



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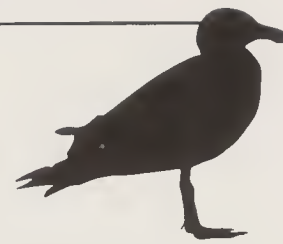
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FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Second GGAS Ohlone Wilderness Backpack Trip May 2 - 5

This is a very strenuous 20-mile hike over four days and three campsites. See February 2003 *Gull* for details. Leader: Kathy Jarrett at 510.547.1233 or email kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com.[\$]

Birding for Kids at Strybing Arboretum San Francisco

Saturdays, May 3, June 7

Meet at 9 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Saturday of the month bird and nature hike through the exciting micro-habitats of Strybing Arboretum. Arrive 15 minutes early to see exhibits—beaks, bones, feathers, nests. For ages 7 and older. Trip ends at 11 a.m. Each child should be accompanied by an adult. Please bring binoculars, small notebook and pencil. Leaders: San Francisco Nature Education Leaders Nancy DeStefanis, Angie Geiger, Scott Walker and Strybing Arboretum Docent Darin Dawson. Sponsored by GGAS, Strybing Arboretum and San Francisco Nature Education 415.876.5220; myblueherons@yahoo.com.

Strybing Arboretum San Francisco

Sundays, May 4, June 1

Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. See April *Gull* for details. GGAS

co-leaders: Allan Ridley, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Helen McKenna, Linda Lyons. 415.566.3241.

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Sunday, May 4

Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Ave. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will drive a short distance to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd. We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird the brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants such as Western Tanager and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify common trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Bring lunch and liquids for the six-mile hike which Malcolm will lead for the 24th year! The trip ends about 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul 925.376.8945.

Monterey Coast and Off-Shore Waters

Saturday and Sunday, May 10-11

This trip is being offered for GGAS.

Day 1, Saturday, Big Sur Andrew Molera State Park is a Monterey County hotspot for vagrant warblers and an excellent location to see a cross-section of breeding species. We will spend the morning birding the park along the Big Sur River to the headlands and beach. We should see

Lazuli Bunting, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Yellow-breasted Chat., Brant, Purple Martin and Vaux's Swift. We'll stop by the lab and see if they've banded any interesting vagrants and look for Northern Parulas which have nested nearby in recent years. After lunch we'll head north on Hwy 1 13.4 miles to Garrapata State Park, known for its abundance of wildflowers and some interesting birds, including Costa's Hummingbird, Black-chinned Sparrow, Rock Wren and MacGillivray's Warbler. We'll do a fair amount of hiking; bring lunch and water. Meet at the wide dirt pullout on the west side of Hwy. 1 which is 21 miles south of the intersection of Carmel Valley Rd. and Hwy. 1 in Carmel and 1/4-mile north of the main entrance to Andrew Molera State Park at 8 a.m. Entry fee: \$3. Leader: Roger Wolfe rogwolfe@cruzio.com [\$]

Day 2, Sunday, Monterey Seabirds An underwater canyon just offshore of Monterey makes it one of the best places in the world for seabirding. The canyon's upwellings attract an abundance of both seabirds and marine mammals. Seabirds seen at this time of year include Black-footed Albatross, Arctic Tern, Sabine's Gull, Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers. Marine mammals include Humpback Whale, Risso's and Pacific White-sided Dolphins and, if we're lucky, Killer Whales. Boat departs at 7:30 a.m. Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey is the one with the restaurants and shops. Near the end, turn right at the Wharfside Restaurant and you will see a large red sign saying *Sam's* and a sign below saying *Monterey Bay Whale Watch*. Check in 1/2-hour before departure time. Trip ends 3 p.m. Bring lunch. Register for Day 2 with Monterey Seabirds at 831.375.4658 or

www.montereyseabirds.com. Cost is \$70 per person. Leaders: Don Roberson, author of *Monterey Birds*, Roger Wolfe and skipper Richard Ternullo. [\$]



Mark Eaton leads a field trip to Las Gallinas.

Iron Horse Trail Bicycle Birding Trip Saturday, May 17

Meet at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station at 8:35 a.m., just outside the turnstile. The trip ends at the Pleasant Hill BART station by 3 p.m. This 20-mile excursion between Dublin and Pleasant Hill is almost entirely on dedicated bicycle paths. Possible birds: Nuttall's Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Lesser Goldfinch, White-throated Swift, Red-winged Blackbird, Red-tailed Hawk, Am. Kestrel, Green Heron, Common Merganser. In addition to birding along the Iron Horse Trail, we will go to Hap Magee Ranch Park in Alamo and Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek. Bicycle helmet obligatory. Wear layers. Bring sun screen, lunch and liquids. We will stop in Danville to purchase food and drink at the Saturday Farmer's Market or Trader Joe's. Rain cancels. Call for departure times from BART stations and leader's cell phone number. Leader: Kathy Jarrett is available at 510.547.1233 or by email at kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com.

Birds of the Eastern Sierra May 24-25

This field seminar focuses on the identification and ecology of birds in the Mono Basin. Since over 300 species have been observed in the Basin, this course will be of great interest to both beginning and advanced birdwatchers. The class will intensively explore a number of sites, mixing short leisurely walks with periods of observation and natural history discussion. Leader David Lukas has led many birdwatching and natural history programs for the Nature Conservancy, Yosemite Association, Audubon Society and Elderhostel. He is the author of several

books and is working on a field guide on birds of the Sierra Nevada. Sponsored by Mono Lake Committee. Register for field seminar by calling 760.647.6595. More extensive description at www.monolake.org. [\$]

Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve, Oakland Sunday, May 25

Meet at 8 a.m. at the preserve parking lot. Sibley is a gem in the Oakland hills where one can see birds not commonly found so close to a major metropolitan area. We usually see

continued on page 5



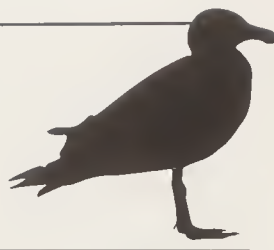
For carpool coordination, call Susan Groves at 510.654.5954 if you can share a ride or if you need a ride.

[\$] trips go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee.

If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if **you are interested in leading a trip**, call Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair.

PROGRAMS

Anne McTavish



In May we will wrap up this year's series of membership programs. The May 15th meeting in Berkeley is our Annual Meeting as well. As always, the programs are free and open to the public. We hope you enjoyed these programs and look forward to seeing you in September when the next series begins.

GGAS meetings begin socially at 7 p.m. Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. For detailed directions to either program location, please see our Web site at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

San Francisco

The San Francisco meetings are held at the County Fair building at the Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way. Parking is available on the street or in the parking lot behind the building off Lincoln at 10th Ave.

Friday, May 9

Douglas Long:

"Getting to Know the Turkey Vulture"

Despite being one of the most common birds in North America, surprisingly little is known about the life history of this misunderstood bird. From evolution to ecology, recent research has overturned many ideas and preconceptions about New World vultures, which face many challenges in a changing world. Of the seven species that range throughout North and South America, the Turkey Vulture is the most ubiquitous, and the most surprising.

Get to know these amazing birds, and meet a live vulture after the presentation. Please join Douglas Long, Acting Chair and Collections Manager in the Department of Ornithology and Mammalogy at the California Academy of Sciences, as he shares insights with us about this amazing species.

Berkeley

The Berkeley meetings are held at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley (between Solano and Marin).

Thursday, May 15

Dave Riensche:

"Saving the State Bird in Your Regional Parks"

The East Bay Regional Parks District provides critical wildlife habitat for more than 500 species of wildlife. Coyote Hills Regional Parks in Fremont is one of our regional treasures, and is recognized as one of the 12 great bird-watching areas in the San Francisco Bay Area. A decade ago, the resident California quail population at Coyote Hills—once numbering over 60 birds—disappeared. An unnatural explosion in the feral cat population and the introduction of the red fox destroyed the park's quail covey. Join us to explore how "Covey Conservationists" returned the State Bird to Coyote Hills, and what they are doing to ensure that the wild cries of the quail are heard in the Regional Parks for years to come!

Dave Riensche (a.k.a. "Doc Quack") has been working for the East Bay Regional Park District for over 14 years teaching people about nature and managing wildlife resources. Currently the District's Wildlife Resource Analyst and former Naturalist, he is also on the Biology Department faculty at Las Positas College, teaching biology, ecology, and natural history topics. He holds a M.S. in Environmental Education, a B.S. in Biology (Wildlife/Environment) and is completing graduate work in Natural Resource Management. He is the author of over 30 *Bird News* articles, 12 published research papers in professional ornithological journals, and *Of Marsh & Mud: Guide to San Francisco Bay Shoreline Life*. His current endeavors are Lizard Abundance and Diversity in Managed Grasslands, California Quail Habitat Enhancement and Re-Introduction Program, Riparian Woodland Breeding Bird Census, Oak Woodland Restoration Projects, and California Least Tern Habitat Enhancement Program. 🐦

See the Great Blue Herons and Their Chicks at Stow Lake!

Every Saturday in May
10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Great blue herons have been nesting and raising their chicks in Golden Gate Park since 1993 when Nancy DeStefanis, Director, San Francisco Nature Education, discovered the first documented nest in San Francisco. Since then, 53 chicks have learned to fly at the Stow Lake colony. Discover the blue herons for yourself.

Meet at Stow Lake Boathouse each Saturday through May 31 and follow the signs to the Heron Explainers Project where Academy of Sciences interns and DeStefanis will be stationed with spotting scopes and offer spectacular views into the herons' nests, answer questions about these amazing birds' habits and behaviors, and lead 11 a.m. nature walks to see the other nesting birds each Saturday. Sponsored by the California Academy of Sciences and GGAS.

For further information about these events, contact Nancy DeStefanis at 415.876.5220; nancyd@sfnature.org.



Nancy DeStefanis helps a Stow Lake visitor see his first nesting great blue heron.

Gib Robinson

Lazuli Buntings and Rufous-crowned Sparrow; Golden Eagle often nests in the park. Trip ends around noon. From Hwy 24, take the Fish Ranch Road exit east of the Caldecott Tunnel. Continue .8 miles to Grizzly Peak Blvd. Turn left; go 2.4 miles on Grizzly Peak to Skyline Blvd. Turn left on Skyline; proceed to park entrance, on the left. Map recommended. Leader: Travis Hails (out of town until May 19). 510.523.1194, TravisHails@hotmail.com.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sunday, June 1

Discover birds next door to the urban environment. See April *Gull* for details. San Francisco Maritime Leader: National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser. 415.561.7100 or 561.7104.

Point Reyes

National Seashore

Sunday, June 1 

Meet at 9 a.m. at White House Pool just east of the intersection of Bear Valley Road and Sir Francis Drake Blvd., north of Park Headquarters. Specific destinations will depend on the birds and the weather but our particular focus will be searching for vagrants. Take lunch and liquids. Dress for the capricious coastal climate. Leader: Ken Burton 415.669.1847.


Yosemite's Bird Life

June 13 – 15

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. We will bird each day and look for owls in the evening. See March 2003 *Gull* for details. Leaders: Dave Quady 510.704.9353 and Bob Lewis. [\$]

Lassen Volcanic

National Park

June 27-29 

Join the Murphy family on the annual GGAS family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we've seen Willow, Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers, Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker and most of the warblers and finches that breed in the mountains.

More serious birders will meet at the Manzanita Lake Campgrounds store at 6:30 a.m. on Friday and again on Sunday. We will bird around the lake for 2-3 hours, return to camp for breakfast, then rendezvous again at the store at 10:30 a.m. for another outing. The Friday outing will be a leisurely 3-mile hike on one of Lassen's beautiful trails. We may climb as much as 700 feet. Wear sturdy shoes and bring lunch and liquids, sun screen, hat, mosquito repellent and warm clothing.

Special Preview: Friday night join Joan and Dan for an hour or so to watch the goings-on at the Hat Lake beaver pond. From Manzanita Lake drive south into the park for about 12 miles. Park in the lot to the left just beyond the hairpin turn at Hat Lake. We'll be there by 7 p.m. to see the wildlife that uses the beaver pond. Bring mosquito repellent, a warm jacket and a flashlight for returning to your camp or cabin.

On Saturday, we'll meet by the camp store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley and Baum Lake. Bring lunch and liquids. This all-day, 100-mile excursion will include a 2-3 hour swim at Lake Britton while watching for Bald Eagles. There are also wonderful trails at Burney Park and some of northern California's finest trout streams. We suggest dinner at


a nearby restaurant after this long day. Sunday we'll meet at 10:30 a.m. to drive through the park, making frequent stops for birding. We should reach the south entrance around 1 p.m. depending upon how long we play in the snow at the summit. Bring warm gloves, a plastic trash bag for a mini-tobaggan, and a camera.

We will have a campfire every evening beginning at 8 p.m.; stop by for information. Bring your own chair (and wine if you choose). We will provide hot water for tea or coffee. Check the campground bulletin boards or office at Hat Creek Resort for our poster, campsite number, and any last-minute changes in the schedule. From the Bay Area drive north on I-5 to its junction with Hwy. 44 in Redding. Go east on Hwy. 44 to the northwest entrance of Lassen. Camping facilities available at Manzanita Lake. Lodging available 15 miles north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station 530.335.7121. Other info can be obtained from the park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96063. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy. [\$]

Note: This trip is subject to last-minute cancellation. This year only, we are asking participants to sign up for the trip. After June 1 please register, preferably by e-mail, at murphsf@att.net or call Dan or Joan at 415.564.0074 if you don't have email. We will confirm the trip the weekend of June 21.

Yosemite High Sierra Ecology Weekend

August 2-3

George Peyton will be leading this popular trip again. Reservations required. Call George at 510.433.2609 weekdays to reserve and for further information. Early reservations at motels in Lee Vining for those who do not want to camp are strongly recommended. Details in June *Gull*. 

A Chance to Change the Future

by Arthur Feinstein

When a California Least Tern fledgling survives to return to the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, our hope for that species' survival is renewed. A successful Burrowing owl nesting season at the wetland at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park brings renewed hope for that struggling species.

These are just two examples of how GGAS is working effectively to preserve our natural world in one of the world's most densely populated urban areas. As you have read in past issues of the *Gull*, neither of these success stories would be occurring if not for the efforts of GGAS.

If you find inspiration in these stories and share our passion for preserving our natural world, we ask you to consider how you can help GGAS build a secure financial base to continue our efforts in the future.

Please consider placing a charitable bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society in your will or living trust. There are significant tax advantages that may be available by making a bequest to a nonprofit organization.

The following is suggested wording for making such a bequest. Please feel free to share this information with your

estate advisor.

"I hereby give and bequeath to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc., in Berkeley, California, the amount of _____ (state dollar amount of gift or percent of estate) to be used exclusively to fund the general and unrestricted conservation purposes of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Golden Gate Audubon Society Tax ID # 94-6086896."

If you have any questions or would like to discuss a possible gift through a bequest or charitable trust, please



Least Tern

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

feel free to call Executive Director Arthur Feinstein at 510.843.2222. We have a team of volunteer experts in this field who can offer advice on the best course for you.

We hope this is of interest to those of our members who are contemplating the future and who hope to give our natural world a little bit of help.

Thank you. 🐦

REMINDER:

GGAS Offers Introduction to Breeding Land Birds of the East Bay

Openings still available

GGAS is offering a four-week course that will introduce beginning birders to some of our common East Bay breeding land birds. The class will emphasize field identification, building birding skills, and the pure joy of watching birds. We will also touch upon natural history and conservation of East Bay birds, birding optics if there is interest, reference materials and ethics.

Classroom instruction will start on Wednesday, May 7; the first field trip will be on Saturday, May 10. The following classes and field trips will run consecutively over the next three weeks (May 14 and 17, May 21 and 24, May 28 and 31) for a total of four classes and four field trips.

The class is limited to 15 students to allow for optimum personal attention in the field. The cost is \$50 per person for the entire program.

To register, send a check in the amount of \$50 made payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society, to the GGAS Office:

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Ste. G
Berkeley, CA 94702.

To enroll through VISA or MasterCard, call the GGAS office during our business hours of Tuesday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 510.843.2222. Questions? Call Lillian at 510.236.4167. 🐦

New Set of Bay Trail Maps Available

by Marjorie Blackwell

The San Francisco Bay Trail Project has recently published a new set of Bay Trail maps for exploring the Bay shoreline. The set consists of six maps that guide hikers, bicyclists and wildlife watchers to more than 230 miles of completed trails. The full-color maps distinguish on- and off-street segments to help plan excursions. The maps also feature 40 recommended routes, with directions, distance, trail surface, natural and historic points of interest, and parking and transit information. The Bay Trail maps were last printed in 1994.

The six-map set sells for \$15.00 and individual maps for \$4.00, including tax and shipping. Visit www.baytrail.org or call the Association of Bay Area Governments at 510.464.7900 to order.

The San Francisco Bay Trail is a continuous path that, when complete, will encircle San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. It will extend over 400 miles, linking the shoreline of all nine Bay Area counties, pass through 47 cities and cross seven toll bridges. Depending on its location, the Bay Trail consists of paved paths, dirt trails, bike lanes, sidewalks or signed bike routes.

Among the more popular bird-watching routes are a 17-mile trail from Oyster Bay to Hayward Regional Shore-

line, a 3.5-mile path along Arrowhead Marsh in San Leandro Bay, a six-mile loop around Bay Farm Island in Alameda, an 11-mile stretch from the Albany Bulb to Marina Bay in Richmond, the Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, and the nine-mile Tolay Creek Trail in Sonoma County.

Since the Bay Trail plan was adopted in 1989, the Golden Gate Audubon Society has closely monitored its development and has worked to mitigate the trail's incursion into areas that infringe on wildlife habitat. "There are conflicts between public access and wildlife habitat," says GGAS Executive Director Arthur Feinstein. "We support the plan but also want the Bay Trail Project to recognize that there are places where we shouldn't be." 🐦



Black-Crowned Night Heron

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations for our many conservation, education and membership activities!

Golden Eagle (\$1000 and more)

Park East Tours (January 2003 Kenya and Tanzania Birding Safari)

Peregrine Falcon (\$500 to \$1000)

Anne & Boyard Rowe (stock)

Least Tern (\$200 to \$500)

Ellen W. Barth, Frank & Janice Delfino (FAWR)

Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$200)

Stephen Bertrand, Robert & Barbara Brandriff, William D. Grasse, Carol Pacht

Gifts (to \$100)

Berkeley Garden Club, Steven Bunyak (in name of Shelby Starkey for teaching 1st & 2nd grade birdwatchers at Windrush School in El Cerrito), Deirdre Elmansoumi, Susan Finch, Kevin & Brenda Fitzpatrick (Gateway), Ann Howard*, Bruce & Jeannette Howard*, Herbert Jorritsma, Richard Kaufmann, Joyce M. Larrick*, Winton McKibben, Ron Morrison, John V. Sudall, Penelope Watson

* With GGAS Supporting Membership

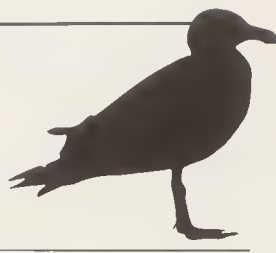
A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest, we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS office for more information. Our phone number is 510.843.2222. Thanks.

GGAS Wish List

The GGAS office could really use a vacuum cleaner. Do you have a spare one in decent condition, or can you find it in your heart to buy us a new one? Donations are tax-deductible. Call 510.843.2222.

BACKYARD BIRDER

Meg Pauletich



Iwould venture to say that courtship among birds exhibits as many variations as there are among human courting rituals. There is a whole lot of bird courtship going on right now! The air is filled with song (finches, wrens, etc.), hooting (owls), and drumming (woodpeckers). Courtship is the beginning of the breeding cycle. The male is vying for a territory to call his own, singing his best arias or displaying his best features (feathers in full breeding plumage, for example) as ploys to attract a female.

Birds, along with other animals and plants, live to perpetuate their species. They have many ways of attracting a mate, using vocalizations, physical and visual displays, feeding rituals and non-vocal sounds such as drumming or making noises using feathers. There is a good deal of posturing as territories are defended.

I saw this demonstrated today as a short but furious battle between two **Oak Titmice** unfolded on my patio. I was alerted by a series of loud calls between the two birds, which were facing each other on the bricks with their crests standing high, their wings spread to the side and their tails propping them up. There were two or three short thrusts between them, leading with their chests and pecking with their beaks. The short skirmish ended when one gave up the battle, but he continued to scream in apparent anger or humiliation.

Because of the shortage of time,

some species such as **ducks and shorebirds** form pairs early, before they migrate north to breed and rear their young. They have a short time to raise families before they return south to avoid the harsh winter. If the male bird is lucky enough to attract a female, she usually rejects his advances at first. If she decides to hang around, they form a pair. Generally, after the family is on the way, the male doesn't waste energy singing till the nest is built and eggs are laid. Then he resumes defending his territory until the eggs hatch and feeding duties take up his time. There are many variations on this theme depending on the species.




Rufous Hummingbird

Male **hummingbirds** jealously guard their feeding territories from bumblebees, moths and all other hummingbirds. They perform spectacular swinging, pendulum-like aerial flights in addition to intimidation flights for all to see. The audience includes females who enter the territory in

breeding condition. If one or more is impressed by a male's actions, the actual mating is brief and the female leaves to build her own nest, lay her eggs and raise her young. At the same time she must defend her own territory against all other hummingbirds. The male awaits any other interested female. It has always amazed me that hummingbirds in our area do all this very early in the year—January and February—and must withstand some serious storms at times. As insurance, some birds have a second brood in the same season.

For several months "my" **Bewick's Wren** has been singing his little heart out from the top of a deadora cedar or from the crab apple tree next door. I haven't noticed a lull in his vigilance as he makes sure no interlopers enter his territory. He's keeping up his strength, augmenting his usual insect diet with safflower seeds. It is thought that he feeds his mate while she's brooding her eggs for 14 days. Then it's back to the bachelor's life. As he sings nearly non-stop, up to 30 bursts a minute, I ponder the amount of energy it takes him to get through a day!

Some of my favorite spring songsters are the **Purple Finch's** joyous, rollicking song, the **American Robin's** sweet, soulful tune and the **Orange-crowned Warbler's** cascading trill. When the **Black-headed Grosbeak** arrives I'm in heaven as both males and females fill the air with gorgeous melodies. For the most part, we've had such beautiful weather since February. Nothing could reduce stress in these terrible times more than a leisurely stroll in one of the many lovely open spaces in our area. Let your mind be free and rejoice in the sights and sounds of Mother Nature. 

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Become a GGAS Supporting Member and Make a Difference Locally

Most people don't realize that the Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS) and the National Audubon Society (NAS) are two separate organizations. Although we share a name and have the same mission of conserving our natural world, NAS looks at issues from a national level and leaves it to GGAS to address our local Bay Area issues.


When you join NAS you automatically become a member of GGAS but

almost all of your money goes to NAS. This year, out of your NAS membership, only \$2.50 goes to GGAS. If you give NAS more money GGAS still only gets \$2.50.

You do have a choice. You can join GGAS directly and become a GGAS Supporting Member. If you do so, all of your \$20 membership dues go to GGAS, staying here in the Bay Area where it will be used to save our local wetlands, streams and other bird habi-

tats and to support our innovative environmental education programs, our field trips and nature programs.

If you want your Audubon membership dollars to help solve our local Bay Area problems, please use the form below and become a GGAS Supporting Member.

Remember, if you also want to support NAS and its efforts at a national level you can always join both organizations. We thank you for your support. 

Golden Gate Audubon Society Supporting Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

A contribution to Golden Gate Audubon in addition to your membership will provide significant support to our conservation, education and recreation programs.

Membership (Family \$35) (Individual \$20) \$ _____

Yes, I also want to donate \$ _____

Total Amount \$ _____

Please make your check payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society or join by using your credit card:

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Your credit card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Credit Card Expiration Date _____ / _____

Mail with this form to:

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702

☐ Please do not give my name to any other organization



OBSERVATIONS

March 1–31, 2003
Bruce Mast



According to the wall calendar, 21 March marked the first official day of spring. For those who prefer to take their seasonal cues from real life, the Bay Area hillsides amply confirmed spring's arrival in March. The meadows blossomed forth with lupines, shooting stars, blue-eyed grass, paintbrush, and monkeyflowers. Swallows returned in swarms, every live oak seemed to conceal an Orange-crowned Warbler, and the season's first orioles and grosbeaks arrived on the scene. Regardless of the rarity of one's sightings, it was a joy to be outdoors.

But plenty of birders enjoyed the additional treat of observing a rare or unusual bird. Here's what they saw.

Loons to Ducks

A Red-necked Grebe just offshore from the SF Yacht Club was one of 115 species tallied on the 22 March SF Bird Blitz (AH; mob). On 5 March, 8–10 Northern Fulmars were seen at the mouth of Pilarcitos Cr. at Half Moon Bay SP, SM (BH). Three days later, 13 more were observed off of Pigeon Pt. SM (RT & AE). The same seawatch produced 3 Black-vented Shearwaters (RT & AE). For the third straight month, the sub-adult **Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*), first found at Princeton Harbor, SM, on 2 Jan. (RT), continued on the rock jetty at Princeton Harbor (mob). The wintering Cattle Egret at Lake Merritt, ALA, was seen on 1 March but not reported again during the month (BM).

Flocks of Snow Geese were reported on 8 and 9 March in SM (TO, RT, AE) and 3 dark-morph Snow Geese visited Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, SON, on the 19th (RL). As many as 6 Eurasian

Wigeons frequented Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, most of the month (RA; MB, BB) and single birds were observed along Redwood Shores Parkway (SM) on the 6th and 14th (RT; GD), at Point Pinole (CC) on the 10th (ADM), and in San Rafael (MRN) on the 23rd (KN). On the 14th, the Eurasian Green-winged Teal was seen again in Redwood Shores, SM (GD; RT). This bird was first observed there back on 6 Feb. (RT).



Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker

Three Tufted Ducks, first reported in Feb., continued in March: at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN (RA), at Lake Merritt, ALA (BM, CL), and along Las Amigas Rd., NAP (JR, LH). A hybrid Tufted Duck / Greater Scaup, also first reported in Feb., was seen again along the Petaluma River, SON, on the 13th (RL).

First seen on 12 March, a female or 1st winter male Harlequin Duck at Oyster Point Marina, SM, pleased multiple observers through the end of the month (EM; RF, DS_n, AE). On 16 March, a

female Long-tailed Duck in basic plumage showed up in a marsh near Princeton Harbor, SM (Kris Olson). Finally, Lake Merritt, ALA, continued to be a reliable location for Barrow's Goldeneye, with a pair reported on 15 March (TD & MD).

Raptors to Alcids

On 15 March, an early Swainson's Hawk flew over the UC Davis Raptor Center, SOL (JC). On 10 March, 6 Black Oystercatchers were seen on the south side of Point Pinole. (ADM) (CC). The 22 March SF Bird Blitz reported the continuing presence of the Glaucous-type Gull at Stow Lake, SF. (AH; mob). As previously reported in this space, this 1st-year bird is generally thought to be a hybrid. On 7 March, a Black-legged Kittiwake was in a gull flock at the mouth of Pilarcitos Cr. in Half Moon Bay, SM (RT). More exciting but well to the north of the Bay Area, a 1st winter **Red-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa brevirostris*) was reported at the mouth of the Klamath River, DN, on 9 March (RFw & BMD). According to JM, there are currently just 2 accepted CBRC records for this species, 1 from ORA and 1 from MRN, both emaciated birds that died shortly after being found. On 26 March, 14 Black Skimmers were seen skimming the Mt. View Shoreline, SCL (RP).

Doves to Thrashers

A Northern Pygmy-Owl was reported from the Salt Point area of SON on 5 March (KF). But the real owling action in March was focused on the parking lot at Muir Woods, MRN. First reported on 8 March, at least 2 Spotted Owls were heard calling in the late evening and early morning hours (DMK; mob). Adding to the drama, a Barred Owl regularly added its "Who cooks for you?" to the chorus (DMK; mob). The Barred Owl was heard calling as late as 30 March and spent one day roosting over a trail in plain view. Barred Owls have been expanding their range in California since 1981 and,

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according to a recent article in *The Condor*, should be considered a threat to displace Spotted Owls.

Elsewhere on the owling scene, a Long-eared Owl was reported from Ed Levin CP near Milpitas, SCL, on 13 March. (LC). On 1 March and again on the 5th, 3 Short-eared Owls were seen along Main Prairie Rd. east of Vacaville in SOL (DB & PB; HH)

A Black-chinned Hummingbird showed up at Mt. Davidson, SF, on 27 March, well ahead of its typical mid-April arrival date, and stayed around for a couple days (PS; GD, BF). According to JM, this is one of the earliest coastal records of this species in Northern California. Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers also visited the Bay Area in March, both showing up on the 8th. The 1st one was seen only 1 day, along Willow Creek Rd., SON. The second one, at Sunol RP, hung around in the live oaks near the foot bridge until the 17th (GB; mob). The only other woodpecker sightings of note were of Pileated Woodpeckers near Chabot Science Center, ALA (SS; mob) and near the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, SM (RT). On 13 March, an observer again reported the Tropical Kingbird at the Cypress Lawn Cemetery in Colma, SM (HH). This bird was initially discovered in Dec. on the CBC.

SF County listers got another chance to tick off Yellow-billed Magpies when 2 birds returned to Hunter's Point on 14 March (CL; DA, BF). On 22 March the SF Bird Blitz contributed another unusual sighting for our files, this time a very early Bank Swallow (AH; mob). On March 2, the wintering **Sedge Wren** (*Cistothorus platensis*) was found again at Half Moon Bay SP, SM (PM). The bird has apparently become quite adept at skulking in the coastal scrub because it was not reported again until the 16th (PM) and there were no further reports

in the month. Finally, the SOL Sage Thrasher was seen at the UC Raptor Center twice in March; first on the 7th (KB) and again on the 15th (JC). The bird first came to human attention on 10 Feb (RMI).

Wood Warblers to Finches


In March, a number of birders made the pilgrimage to Sacramento to view the Cape May Warbler but, otherwise, vagrant warbler reports from the Bay Area



Great-Tailed Grackle

were nonexistent. The Summer Tanager of Middle L., GGP, SF, reappeared on the 1st after a 2-month absence (JM). An early report of at least 2 Grasshopper Sparrows came in on 13 March from Ed Levin CP in Milpitas, SCL (LC). On

2 March, an ever-elusive Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was found at Harbor Way and Littlefield Ave. in South San Francisco, SM. The bird was refound sporadically throughout the month, mostly at high tide (RT; mob). There are only three previous county records for Nelson's, a fall record at Princeton Harbor and two winter records at Pescadero Marsh and Steinberger Slough in Redwood Shores. The same outing that produced the Nelson's also turned up a Swamp Sparrow, which was seen once more on the 15th (RT; JL).

From 2 Feb to 24 March, a male Indigo Bunting made occasional visits to a privately owned and operated feeder in Lafayette, CC (MS). Over in SF, 2 adult male Tri-colored Blackbirds spent 6 March in the company of about 15 Brewer's Blackbirds on the grassy shores of Stow Lake (SB). Two days later (the 8th), the female Rusty Blackbird was seen once more in a shopping center parking lot in Sunnyvale (GG). She initially showed up there back in January. Completing the Icterid report, on the 13th, a female Great-tailed Grackle was seen in downtown Tiburon, MRN, mingling with a blackbird flock (RL). And ending this month's Observations, on 1 March, a male Cassin's Finch was in the trees near Lake Merced, SF (DA). 

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Abbreviations for Observers: DA, David Armstrong; RA, Richard Ackley; BB, Bob Behrstock; DB, Dennis Braddy; GB, George Bing; KB, Ken Burton; MB, Matt Brady; PB, Patricia Braddy; SB, Steve Bauer; HC, Hugh Cotter; JC, Jerry Colburn; LC, Les Chibana; RC, Roy Carlson; ADM, Al DeMartini; GD, Gary Deghi; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; MD, Mary Daly; TD, Tim Daly; AE, Al Eisner; BF, Brian Fitch; DF, David Feliz; HF, Harry Fuller; KF, Kathy Francone; RF, Rich Ferrick; RFo, Rob Fowler; GG, George Gniffeth; AH, Alan Hopkins; BH, Bob Hirt; HH, Hugh Harvey; LH, Lisa Hug; SH, Steve Huckabone; CL, Calvin Lou; JL, John Luther; LL, Les Lieurance; RL, Rick Lebaudour; RLn, Robin Leong; BM, Bruce Mast; BMD, Brooke McDonnell; DM, Dan Murphy; DMK, David MacKenzie; EM, Edgar Mullin; JM, Joe Morlan; PM, Peter Metropulos; RMI, Ron Melzer; KN, Karen Nichols; TO, Trent Orr; RP, Robert Power; BRc, Bob Richmond; JR, Jean Richmond; MR, Mark Rauzon; DSn, Dan Singer;

ES, Emilie Strauss; Maury Stern; PS, Paul Saraceni; RS, Rich Stallcup; SS, Sylvia Sykora; RT, Ronald S. Thorn; MU, Myra Ulvang; AW, Anna Wilcox; DWI, Denise Wight

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; DN, Del Norte; GGP, Golden Gate Park; MEN, Mendocino; MRN, Marin; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SIS, SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve.

Elsie Roemer Awards

continued from page 1

Jacqui Smalley and the East Bay Conservation Committee

Helping community activists preserve the threatened Last Wild Canyon in the Oakland Hills. Helping create the Butters Land Trust to assist in that brave effort. Helping local activists preserve several segments of Cordonces Creek in Berkeley. Leading the successful effort to restore wetlands at Oakland's Clinton Basin—and lots more. Is it any wonder that Jacqui Smalley is our East Bay Conservation Committee Chairperson? When it comes to assisting community groups in their natural resource preservation and restoration efforts, and when help is needed in implementing local community projects on the ground, Jacqui is the one to call. Her calm approach to heated issues helps people take a step back and think logically about how to solve issues. Her legal background is invaluable in developing conservation strategies. Jacqui exemplifies what it means to be an Elsie Roemer Conservation Award recipient.

GGAS extends its congratulations and gratitude to all of our 2002-2003 Elsie Roemer Award recipients. Please come help us celebrate their successes at our GGAS Annual Meeting in Berkeley on Thursday, May 15, 2003. 🐦

Correction: The photo caption for our cover article in last month's *Gull* stated that California Brown Pelicans nest at the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. This is incorrect. Large numbers of Pelicans do roost at the Refuge but they breed in southern California (Channel Islands) and Mexico.

Volunteer Opportunity

Bird and Give Joy to Others

Every once in a while we get a request from a visitor to the Bay Area asking if someone would be willing to spend a day birding with them, showing them the best sites and most interesting birds. Usually they hope to go birding for a half-day, occasionally for a whole day.

We used to have a list of GGAS folks who were happy to provide such a service but our list is out of date. If you would like to be added to the list, please call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222 or email us at ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. Volunteers who do this say it's a lot of fun and a great way to meet interesting people. We look forward to hearing from you.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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